my mind, would rise up to ask: "Are you sure that it's worth the trouble to . . . ?" And, since the trouble was enormous, the thought immediately withdrew.

The trip to Germany last summer shook off my apathy somewhat; but as soon as I got back here, it took a deeper hold on me. I accused the weather (it rained incessantly that year); I accused the air of Cuverville (and I still fear that it exerts a soporific influence over me); I accused my routine (indeed, it was very bad; I never left the garden, where, for hours on end, I would *contemplate* the plants one after another); I indicted my morals (and how could my utterly stagnant mind have triumphed over my body?). The fact is that I was becoming stultified; no enthusiasm, no joy. Eventually, seriously worried, intent on shaking off that torpor to which was added an unhealthy restlessness, I convinced myself and convinced Em. that nothing but the diversion of travel could save me from myself. To tell the truth, I did not convince Em. I was well aware of this, but what could I do? Go ahead anyway. I therefore resolved to go. I almost killed myself in efforts to justify my conduct; going was not enough for me; in addition Em. had to approve of my going. I hurled myself against a disheartening wall of indifference. No, I did not hurl myself; I sank in; I lost my footing; I was engulfed. I know well enough today and already suspected then the lamentable misunderstanding caused by Em/s voluntary (and yet almost unconscious) — abnegation (I can think of no other word to describe it). It contributed not a little to demoralizing me. Nothing more painful than the exaggeration of my restlessness, of my feelings, etc., to overcome that indifference. Fortunately, the memory of all that is fading now. . . . But if I had to relive my life, I could not see that period ap-

proach without anguish. . . .

And all the same, I started out (leaving behind minutely detailed instructions for the setting out of fruit trees that Croux was to send somewhat later). I started out, then (as well as I can remember, the 10th of October), and first took Dominique back to his parents in Bordeaux. I planned to reach Africa by way of Spain; the ships' sailings did not permit this. My horror of ocean-crossings almost made me hesitate; but in Marseille, where I arrived around six in the morning, the radiant weather and the lack of wind made up my mind for me and I reserved my berth for the afternoon of the same day.

I was planning a book on Africa; I had not been able to write it at Cuverville from the very insufficient notes I had brought back from the trip with Em. and Gheon. I had to see the country again. I set out with the intention of writing from day to day. Considerations, reflections, all that can be added later; what cannot be recaptured or invented is the sensation.

It is from this trip that I brought back the notes that I put together